

Hawaii MARINE

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Marines save lives



Lance Cpl. Mark R. Drinkwater II, fire direction controlman, Alpha Battery, 1st Battalion, 12th Marine Regiment, smiles after receiving a lei from Ami Hyatt and his sister Julia Drinkwater. The girls were swept out by a current Sunday and Drinkwater, Staff Sgt. John Hyatt and Lance Cpl. Andrew Kopacek rescued them and Theresa Drinkwater, who also became a victim when she entered the water in an effort to rescue the girls.

Three Warriors rescue swimmers at base beach

Cpl. Megan L. Stiner
Press Chief

Weekends aboard Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, are usually spent casually indulging in outdoor activities such as sporting events, lying out in the sun, surfing and swimming in the Pacific.

For three Marines and three civilians, one of those lazy days in the afternoon sun turned out to be a dramatic life-threatening situation when a current swept two young girls out into a rip tide at Boulders/Hilltop Beach, Sunday.

"I wasn't even down to the beach yet, when I realized that the girls had been pulled out into the ocean by the current," said Staff Sgt. John T. Hyatt, fund administrator, Anderson Hall, and father of Ami, one of the young girls in the water. "As soon as I figured out what was going on, I ran down into the water to help out."

According to Lance Cpl. Mark R. Drinkwater II, fire direction control man, Alpha Battery, 1st Battalion, 12th Marine Regiment, the two girls, one of which was his sister, were playing in the water when a current sucked them out.

"Once Theresa, the mother of one of the girls, noticed they were out in the water and couldn't swim back, she jumped in to try to help them back to shore," said Hyatt, Tampa, Fla. native. "She then became the third victim."

Over the next 20 minutes, Drinkwater, Hyatt and Lance Cpl. Andrew G. Kopacek, ammunition technician, Alpha Battery, 1/12, all quickly made their way into the

water in an effort to get the three struggling swimmers out of the water.

"Kopacek was the first one to reach the girls, and he helped Julia onto some nearby rocks," said Hyatt. "At that point Drinkwater had made his way out there and he grabbed Ami, my daughter, and swam her onto the beach."

According to Hyatt, once he reached Theresa, she had already been in the water for at least 15 minutes, and she was beginning to go into shock.

"I couldn't hold her up, so I had to just keep pushing her with the waves and eventually we made it to shore," he explained. "Brianna, an older sister of Julia, had been able to get out onto the rocks and help her sister back to the beach, so we had everyone out of the water."

Although everyone was safe on shore, Theresa had swallowed a lot of water and needed medical attention.

"She was going in and out of consciousness and went into shock from exhaustion," Hyatt said. "An ambulance came and took her to the hospital, and she ended up being okay."

According to Hyatt, the girls were both in the water for 15 minutes and Theresa was out there for at least 20 minutes — just treading water in four- to five-foot waves.

"If he (Hyatt) had not been there, I don't think I would be alive," said Theresa, who spent one night recovering in the hospital.

"It was a surreal experience," 20-year-old Kopacek admitted, "It is hard to recall what exactly happened because it all went by so fast."

See RESCUE, A-7

4th Force Recon joins war in Iraq

Cpl. Evan M. Eagan

II Marine Expeditionary Force (FWD)

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq — The last time 5th Battalion, 14th Marine Regiment, 4th Marine Division, was deployed to a combat zone Franklin D. Roosevelt was president and the United States was in a world war against the Japanese in the South Pacific.

Arriving in Fallujah in late September after more than 60 years of readiness, the battalion is back in the fight.

Various elements of 5/14, served in support of Operation Desert Storm in the early 1990s; however, this marks the first time the whole battalion was deployed to a combat zone since World War II.

Although 5/14, is an artillery unit by trade, they deployed as a provisional military police battalion with Marines coming from various active duty and reserve units throughout the Marine Corps.

According to Chief Warrant Officer Thomas Tomka, force protection and mobile training team commander, Headquarters Company, Military Police Battalion, 5/14, II Marine Expeditionary Force (FWD) 5/14 is comprised of Marines from 1st Battalion, 14th Marines, an active duty MP Company from Camp Pendleton, a TOW Company from 25th Regiment, MP's from Louisiana and Minnesota, and Marines from 4th Force Reconnaissance from Hawaii (and Reno, Nev.)

Prior to deploying in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, the unit came together at Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms, Calif., for security and stability operations training and a revised combined arms exercise.

"We spent from June, when we got activated, to September at Twentynine Palms training for this," said Tomka, a Vietnam and Gulf War veteran. "We got acclimated and trained for this mission and we are motivated."

The battalion is tasked with four main missions while serving in Iraq: area security, convoy security, law enforcement, and operating five detention facilities throughout Al Anbar province, to include the detention facility here.

The battalion is not the first Reserve unit to deploy and support a mission with a different military occupational specialty other than their own; however, they have laid the groundwork for the training of future Reserve units with the same mission.

"We met the needs of the Marine Corps by overcoming and adapting our MOS qualifications to meet the mission requirements," said 1st Sgt. Ronnie Freeman, first sergeant, Headquarters Company, MP Battalion, 5/14, II MEF (FWD). "Even though we are all infantry trained, there were still training requirements which needed to be instituted to ensure the success of the mission. We analyzed these deficiencies, developed a training plan and executed the plan with as much realism as training allowed."

For these Marines, transitioning from an artillery unit to a provisional military police battalion was not as difficult a task as it may have been for other units.

Stacked with civilian law enforcement personnel from

See 4TH FORCE, A-7

Base Facilities lights up Mokapu Mall

Lance Cpl. Ryan Trevino

Combat Correspondent

The energy branch of Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, Facilities Department held an energy awareness fair Oct. 26 at the entrance of the Mokapu Mall aboard K-Bay. The fair was part of a Department of Defense-wide effort to inform service members of the importance of energy conservation and its role in making a more efficient military.

The fair was part of energy awareness week, which ran Oct. 24 to 28. Bill H. Nutting, energy manager, Facilities Department, said the main purpose of the fair was to increase energy awareness of every service member on base.

"We want to encourage them to use practices that save energy and conserve water," said Nutting.

The base energy bill has leveled out at \$14 million per year, and the water bill is down 30 percent from last year at \$2 million, said Nutting.

"People need to focus on what they can do to bring down these numbers by eliminating waste,"

said Nutting.

There are little things service members can do to make a big difference when it comes to energy conservation and eliminating waste. One conservation tip is to always remember to shut windows in rooms when the air conditioning is on, and never leave unattended faucets running, said Nutting.

During the Energy Fair, the energy team gave away free products such as envelope openers, magnets and keyboard dusters as reminders to be more energy efficient throughout the day. Energy-saving products available at the commissary were also on display. These items included light-emitting diode color-changing globe; and holiday lights that use one-tenth the energy as regular holiday lights. Solar-powered yard lights were also available for purchase.

According to Nutting, solar power is a great way to conserve energy. He also said that he would encourage service members to replace their old water heaters with solar-powered water heaters.



Camp Smith to renovate Recreation Center

Lance Cpl. R. Drew Hendricks

U.S. Marine Corps Forces Pacific

CAMP H.M. SMITH, Hawaii — If Marines from Camp Smith are wondering why their precious recreation center has been stripped from under their noses, they will be quite pleased with the reason.

The Marine Corps is spending approximately \$500,000 in renovations to give the run-down Rec Center a face-lift.

"I spent a great deal of time in the Rec Center, and I noticed a lot of

things that could change," said Lance Cpl. Javor Robinson, a motor vehicle operator aboard Camp H.M. Smith. "From what I'm hearing, it sounds like the bosses are headed in the right direction. It shows that they care about us even though there aren't a lot of us here."

The reconstruction is more than a simple step in the right direction — it's a complete overhaul.

"Everything is going to be brand spanking new," said Gabriella Black, the Single Marine and Sailor Program event coordinator. "New appliances,

paint, carpet, tile. The only thing not new is the building."

The changes are more than skin deep. A few luxuries will be added along with the new look.

The old, big-screen TV that never worked will be replaced with a walled-off mini theatre, which will feature a large movie screen, comfortable recliners, beanbag chairs and even red carpet for that genuine theatre look.

"Essentially, they are the movies that are no longer in the theatre but are not yet on DVD — similar to what you would find at the dollar theatre,

so they will be up-to-date movies," said Black.

More electronic goodies are going to be thrown in, things that will make any gamer foam at the mouth.

Eight TVs will be provided solely for video games. Four of the TVs will be outfitted with Xboxes, the other four with PlayStation 2s, not to mention the classics like pool and darts.

One of the last, but certainly not least, of the changes to the Rec Center will be the kitchen.

See REC CENTER, A-5

NEWS BRIEFS

Marine Corps Birthday Ball Pageant

The annual Marine Corps Birthday pageant/cake-cutting ceremony will be held Thursday at 10 a.m. at Dewey Square and will feature traditional performances by Marines wearing period uniforms.

Invitees and others who would like to attend this event may R.S.V.P. Richard Kirby, Marine Corps Base Hawaii protocol officer, at 257-7704.

School groups interested in attending may contact Amy Bevan, school liaison officer, at 630-8281 or by e-mail at amy.bevan@usmc.mil.

PWMA Continues to Accept Brick Orders

Orders for inscribed/personalized bricks, to be placed in the Pacific War Memorial's "Walkway of Honor," which is located near the Main/H-3 Gate entrance to MCB Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, may be made now through the end of December.

More information is available from the Pacific War Memorial Association by calling 533-3759, or online at www.pacificwarmemorial.org.

Veterans Day Events at Battleship Missouri

At noon on Veterans Day, Nov. 11, the Battleship Missouri Memorial will hold a moment of silence to recognize those service members who have given their lives.

In addition, the memorial is extending complimentary admission and flag-raising privileges throughout Veterans Day to all American veterans, including active duty personnel, Reservists and National Guard members.

All visitors will receive a button that commemorates the 60th anniversary of the end of World War II, which was celebrated Sept. 2.

To take advantage of the complimentary admission offer, veterans must present a valid military ID or discharge papers at the admission window. Veterans can go directly to the ship's Signal Bridge, 03 level, to raise flags or report to the memorial's pier-side Victory Store for more instructions. Veterans are welcomed to bring their personal flag to raise or purchase one at the store. A certificate of presentation is also available for a small cost. The buttons will be available to all visitors at the Victory Store.

For more information on the Battleship Missouri Memorial, call Keith DeMello at 531-0244.

UH Warriors to Hold Military Appreciation Night

The University of Hawaii will extend a buy-one, get-one-free discount to all armed services members with a valid ID card, including family members, for the UH Military Appreciation night game, Nov. 12, against Utah State.

This offer is available at the Stan Sheriff Center and Aloha Stadium Box offices only and applies only to presale purchases in certain seating sections.

Only one discount purchase per ID card will be allowed.

Service members will be honored during a special presentation.

Post Office Extends Hours Starting Dec. 5

The Base Post Office will have extended hours from Dec. 5 to 23 for the holiday season. Beginning Dec. 5, the Base Post Office will be open from 8 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., Monday through Friday and 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturdays.

The Post Office will be open Dec. 24 for parcel pickup only.

For more information, contact the Base Post Office at 257-2008.

Important Phone Numbers

On-Base Emergencies	911
Military Police	257-7114
Child Protective Service	832-5300
Fraud, Waste, Abuse & EEO	257-8852
Business Management Hotline	257-3188
Pothole & Streetlight Repair	257-2380
Base Information	449-7110

Hawaii MARINE

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Submit items for the Hawaii Marine to managing editor no later than noon on the Friday prior to publication, using the following addresses:

HAWAII MARINE, Box 63062, Building 216,
MCB Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii 96863
E-MAIL: EDITOR@HAWAIIIMARINE.COM
FAX: 257-1289, PHONE: 257-8835

In the CG's Mailbox



HUMMER

Good Afternoon Sir,

I am a BN KVC (Battalion Key Volunteer), and I received the attached document from one of my KVs. My child does not attend school at Mokapu aboard the installation, and I know these are not DoD Schools, and I am not sure what you can do, but I wanted to bring this to your attention (if someone has not already done so).

On the attached document under the "Breakfast & Lunch Program" where it states that, "Mokapu has a NO LUNCH LOAN POLICY. If a child has no money in their account for lunch, they will be given a roll and milk only."

Sir, I am a bit upset about this statement. I understand that the parent must be responsible and make sure that a deposit is in the account for the child to eat, but let's say a parent forgets lunch money or by mistake, it slips their mind, you are going to punish a child for the parent's mistake. My child attends an elementary school out in town, and I, on many occasions, have forgotten to provide lunch money (truly by mistake). And, out of my own forgetfulness would not want my child to get a "milk and roll" for lunch.

It is no secret that the school system in Hawaii does not compare to the school systems where we have been stationed in Tampa, Maryland, South Carolina or North Carolina. We have even considered doing ERD next year when my husband is to deploy again and go back to the home we own in Dunedin, Fla., just so our kids can get a good education. This is nothing that I have not written to my congressman in Florida, and I know it is an on-going problem. I am not one to complain, but this is, and has been for many years, a QOL (quali-

The commanding general invites input from the base community via the CG's Mailbox on the following topics:

- What are we doing that we shouldn't be doing?
- What are we not doing that we should be doing?
- What are we doing that we should be doing better?

Responses should include a recommendation that will help solve the problem and must include your name and return address.

E-mail your suggestions to the commanding general at CGMAIL@mcbh.usmc.mil.

If you don't have an e-mail account, you can fax

your suggestions to 257-3290, or you can mail them to:

**Commanding General
(Attn: CG Mail)**
MCB Hawaii
Box 63002
MCB Kaneohe Bay, HI
96863-3002

Your suggestions can also be dropped off in person on base at the Adjutant's Office in Building 216.

(Editor's Note: Letters of any length may be trimmed and edited in the interest of good taste and brevity.)

ty of life) issue for all service members serving in Hawaii.

But Sir, back to the issue at hand, this one about the "milk and roll" takes the cake. How can they do this to our kids? They get federal funds to have our kids attend their schools in this state and now they can only give them a roll and milk. I am sure that some parents may take advantage of a "loan program," but I am sure, for the majority, it is an honest mistake when you forget to give your child lunch money for a day. I would be willing to donate my own money to this school just so a child would get a lunch.

Thank you so much for your time.

Respectfully,
Faith M. Cowart
Administrative Assistant
U.S. Army Pacific (USARPAC), G-2

Dear Mrs. Cowart,

I have asked my school liaison officer, Amy Bevan, to look into the circumstances surrounding the e-mail you sent on Sept. 20, as its contents fell under her area of responsibility. I appreciate that you have taken the time to participate in the "CG Mail" program.

You have expressed concerns about the Mokapu Elementary Lunch Program that was explained in the Mokapu Elementary Calendar of Events dated Sept. 14. The School Liaison Officer has since worked with the Mokapu Elementary (interim) principal, Annette Ostrem, the Parent Teacher Association president, Kim Johnson, and the school's Parent Community Networking coordinator,

Ariana Le, to develop a solution for the Lunch Loan Program.

It is my pleasure to let you know that your concerns have been rectified and Mokapu now has a Lunch Loan Program. Prior to his departure, Biggs handed control of the Lunch Loan Program over to the PTA. The PTA donated \$100, and a matching private donation of \$100 was made by a parent to start a fund from which lunch loans could be drawn. The PTA is responsible for the daily accounting and management of this fund. Ostrem is in direct communication with the PTA and provides appropriate guidance to ensure our children receive the best possible care during their school day. As well, the School Lunch Loan Program has been added to the agenda for discussion at the next School Superintendent's meeting.

A healthy and safe environment for all our children is the highest priority for Marine Corps Base Hawaii and our school liaison officer. We take great care to ensure that our schools, especially our on base school, are taking the best possible care of all our children. Involved parents are the key to successful schools, and I thank you for your diligence in reporting this to my staff. The school liaison officer will strive to keep you and other parents informed on all relevant issues. For any future concerns, you are welcome to contact my school liaison officer directly at 630-8281 or amy.bevan@usmc.mil. Again, I appreciate your interest and participation in the "CG Mail" program.

Sincerely,
Steven A. Hummer
Commanding General
Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay

Commanding Generals Environmental Policy Statement

As the Commanding General, Marine Corps Base Hawaii (MCBH), I am dedicated to maintaining facilities and services that support readiness and global projection of our operating forces. We must be committed to environmental excellence and minimize risks to our mission by ensuring responsible stewardship of our land and resources in order to sustain and enhance mission readiness and access to training areas.

MCBH will continually improve its environmental performance through a systematic environmental management program, which will be an integral part of our day-to-day decision-making and long term planning.

We will continue to assess our activities to determine their impact on the environment and actively seek opportunities to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of our environmental management.

We will protect our natural and cultural resources. MCBH will meet this challenge with dedication and focus to conserve the natural and cultural resources with which we have been entrusted and the clean up of contaminated sites.

We will integrate a pollution prevention ethic into all activities through source reduction, resource recovery and recycling. Sound pollution prevention practices improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our operations while preserving the environment.

We will maintain strong community relations by partnering with our neighbors and regulatory agencies to enhance stewardship of the environment, create goodwill, and build trust. The environment affects everyone. Our goal is to work with all the people of Hawaii through this partnership to the mutual benefit of everyone.

Compliance with environmental laws is critical to maintaining our readiness. I ask that each Marine. Sailor, family member, or individual, no matter what your capacity at MCBH, take responsibility to comply with environmental laws, regulations and policies to ensure that we have done all that we can to meet our responsibility of good stewardship of our environment.

S.A. Hummer

S. A. HUMMER
Brigadier General, U.S. Marine Corps
Commanding General, Marine Corps Base Hawaii

See MENTOR, A-8

Weekend weather outlook

Today



Day — partly cloudy with isolated morning rain showers; easterly winds at 10 to 12 mph with gusts to 20 mph; 20 percent chance of rain

Night — partly cloudy with scattered showers; easterly winds at 10 mph; 40 percent chance of rain

High — 81 Low — 74

Saturday



Day — partly cloudy with scattered morning rain showers; easterly winds at 10 to 15 mph; 20 percent chance of rain

Night — partly cloudy with scattered showers; easterly winds at 10 mph; 50 percent chance of rain

**High — 81
Low — 74**

Sunday



Day — partly cloudy with scattered showers; easterly winds at 8 to 10 mph; 25 percent chance of rain

Night — partly cloudy with scattered rain showers; easterly winds at 8 mph; 40 percent chance of rain

**High — 81
Low — 73**



A Marine studies various Arabic language books and pamphlets during a one-week Iraqi Dialect Familiarization Course held for Marines with 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, who will be deploying to Iraq.

Infantry Marines trade field for classroom to learn language skills

Cpl. Megan L. Stiner
Press Chief

When infantry Marines aren't in the field training for an upcoming deployment, they spend much of their workdays in a classroom setting, learning different techniques and tactics that will help them in a hostile environment. Thirty-six Marines with 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, recently spent time going through a

different type of training — in a classroom environment. Instead of having weapons familiarity and patrolling maneuvers drilled into their heads, they were taught a tool that will enhance their understanding and communications abilities in Iraq. The Marines went through a one-week Iraqi Dialect Familiarization Course, taught by two instructors from the Defense Language Institute, Mary and Augustin Youhanna.

The duo has spent the last two years traveling around to military bases to teach the newly implemented course to Marines. The classes last from one week to one month, depending upon the amount of time the Marines are allotted for the course. "We teach them a few basic phrases," said Mary, a 22-year veteran instructor. "We tend to focus on the customs, though. The Iraqi people are very sensitive, and knowing

about their culture can be a big help for the Marines." Although Marine units usually travel with interpreters while they are in Iraq or Afghanistan, equipping more Marines with a familiarization of the language can help to break down the barrier between the cultures and give the Marines an advantage in a combat area. "We have heard from some individuals that they don't always have an interpreter with them," said the

Baghdad, Iraq native. "Sometimes one word can save lives, though. By teaching them some basic phrases, we give them the tools to be able to communicate, and that increases the Marines chances of building friendships with the Iraqi people."

Throughout the week, the Marines were taught everything from basic numbers to more advanced language skills and accents as well as Iraq's culture and courtesies.

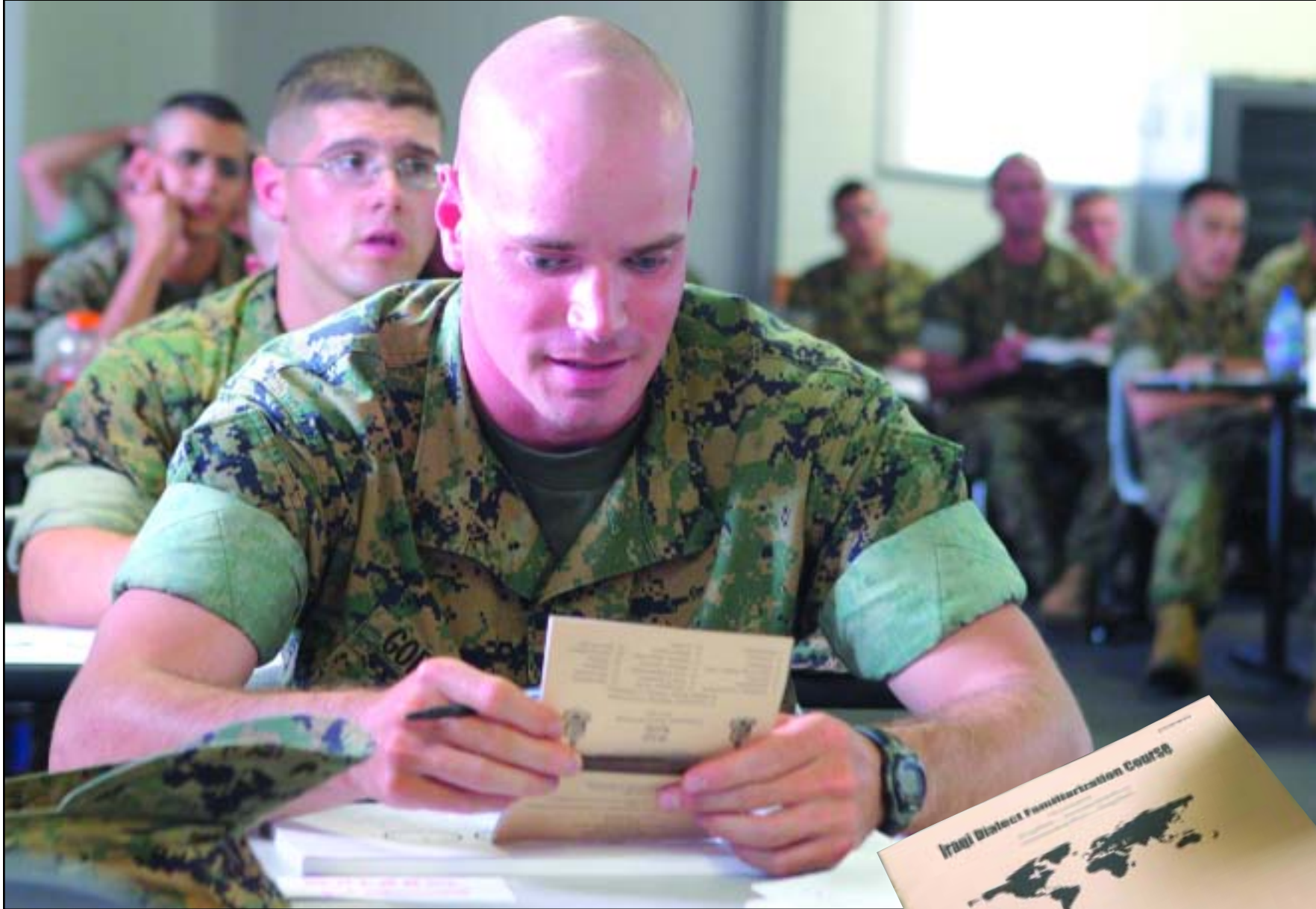
"They only have one week to learn everything," said Mary. "But we make sure they understand basic phrases like, 'Do you have weapons?' and customs such as feeding habits and religious practices."

They were taught through repetition, PowerPoint presentations and quizzes. They were each given pamphlets containing frequently used phrases as well as other reading materials to help them through the course.

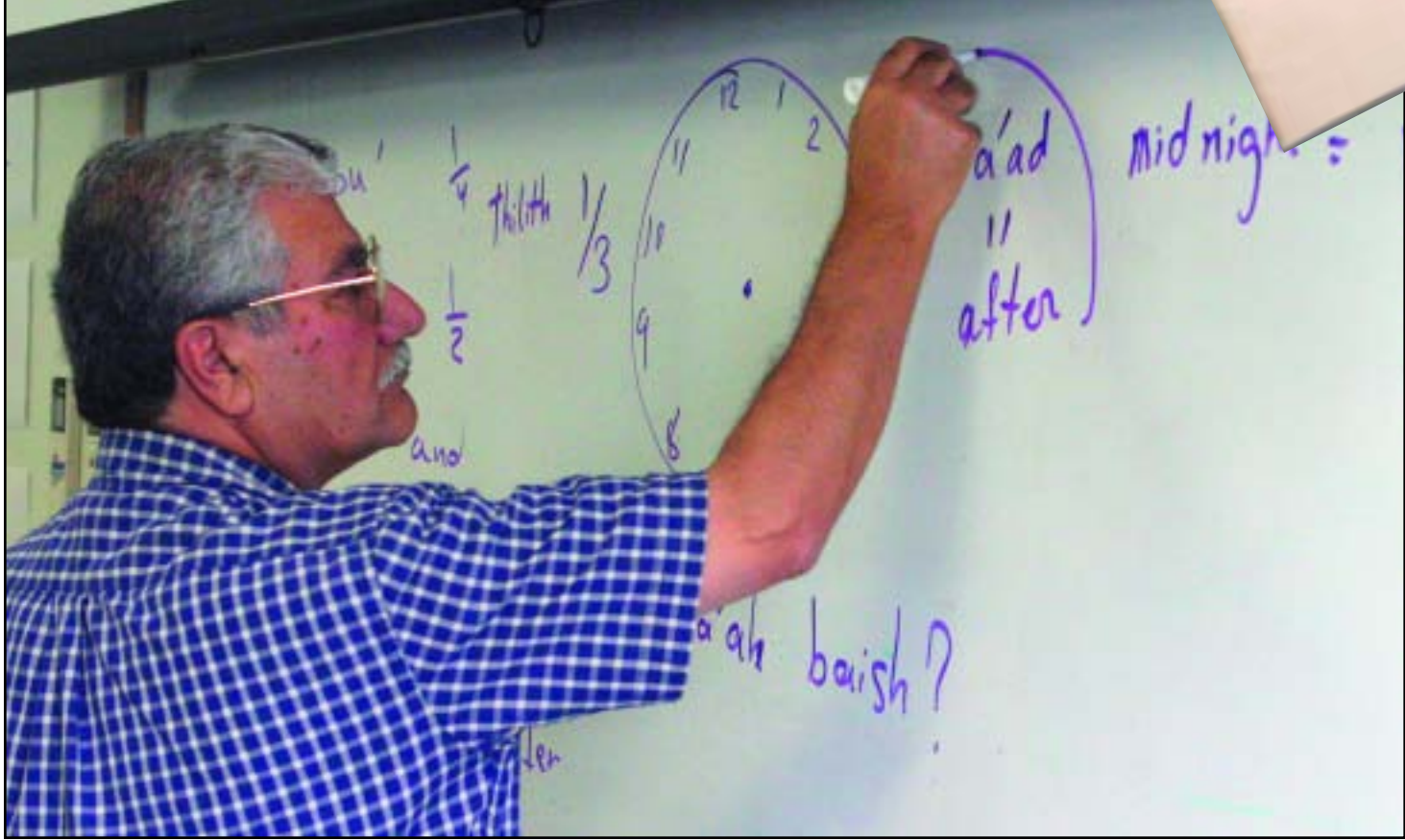
"We have daily quizzes," she said. "Mostly, we just do a lot of communicating during class to make sure everyone is picking up on the dialect and pronunciation of the words."

Although it is difficult to learn a new language as quickly as the Marines were expected to, many of them realize the importance of the knowledge to be gained, and took the course seriously.

"It is easy to teach a class when the students are willing to learn and want to be there," Mary explained. "Most of the individuals do not know anything about the culture and language, but they pick up on the basics pretty quick. It is very important for all military branches of service to gain this type of training and understanding of a people whose country they are going to. One word can save a life. The best way to gain positive relationships with other people is communication and understanding, and that is what we are teaching them through this course."



A Marine looks at a pamphlet in order to find the exact pronunciation of a phrase an instructor asked him to say in Arabic. Throughout the weeklong course, the Marines were verbally quizzed on different Arabic phrases from numbers to basic questions they will more than likely use during their upcoming deployment.



Augustin Youhanna, instructor, Defense Language Institute, writes down Arabic phrases and the English equivalent to give the students a visual to learn from. Throughout the week, Marines from 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, were taught phrases and cultural knowledge through the use of PowerPoint presentations, verbal lectures and repetition.



A Marine from 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, looks through his notes during a weeklong Iraqi Dialect Familiarization Course designed to introduce Iraqi language and culture to Marines deploying to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

On the skyline ... with 1/3

by Sgt. Joe Lindsay

On the Skyline is a weekly column written by Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, Combat Correspondent Sgt. Joe Lindsay. Lindsay was recently deployed with the 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment to

Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms, Calif., where 1/3 participated in training to prepare them for their upcoming deployment to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

RP specialist ready to head out on second combat tour

It might be said that Seaman Travis Lassiter, a religious program specialist serving with 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, based out of Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, was born for the position he currently holds.

After all, his parents had just moved to Surrey, British Columbia, in Canada, to run a church as pastors, before they welcomed little Travis into the world.

After a few family moves throughout his childhood, including ones to Oregon, Texas, and North Carolina, Lassiter said he noticed himself “feeling the call of the Lord” more and more as he got older.

After graduating high school in Charlotte, N.C., Lassiter found himself in Indianapolis, studying theology at Indiana Bible College.

“I planned on staying for all four years, and, after graduating, wanted to become a minister,” commented Lassiter. “But at the time, I didn’t have the discipline to wait another three years, so after my freshman year, I left college and headed to Florida to start ministering right away.”

At the church in Florida, Lassiter found himself as a minister’s assistant, but said he soon realized, like anything else in life, he would have to pay his dues.

“I guess my head was in the clouds a little, but looking back, I think I was expecting to be the pastor of the church before I was ready. Things don’t usually happen overnight like that in life, and after six months, I think I became a little disillusioned. I moved back to Charlotte and worked construction. I still attended church every week, but the next few years were pretty dark for me.”

During those few years, Lassiter said he never forgot his dream of one day becoming a minister, but that he became depressed for not actually taking steps to realize that dream.

“I was basically miserable during those years back in Charlotte,” recalled Lassiter. “I would work construction jobs all day, and then come home and sit on the couch and watch television in an empty apartment. Then, I’d wake up and do it all over again. This went on for a long time, day in and day out.

“One day, I was walking up the steps to my apartment after work, with my head down, feeling like I would never make it to my door. Not because I was physically tired, but because I was so down on myself. Then, I felt the Lord’s presence, and I just started crying. It felt like He carried me to the top of the steps. He told me He loved me and I knew then that I had to fol-



Photo Courtesy of Seaman Travis Lassiter

Seaman Travis Lassiter, a 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, religious program specialist from Charlotte, N.C., raises his arms in prayer during a service in Fallujah during the unit’s deployment to Iraq. Lassiter is slated to again deploy with 1/3 to a combat zone, this time to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

low my faith and not just go through the motions.”

Still, it would be a couple more years before Lassiter followed through on changing his life.

“I wish right then and there that I would have made a change in my life, but more time went by, and I kept living the same life. Then, finally, I started to quit watching TV right when I got home after work, and instead started praying. Every day I would come home after work and just pray. Then one day, after praying, I flipped on the TV and one of those ‘Accelerate your Life’ Navy commercials came on. I wrote down the 1-800 number and they put me in touch with the local recruiter. Pretty soon I was signed up.”

Before shipping to basic training, Lassiter went to Ohio to visit an old friend. It was there that he ran into the woman who would later become his wife.

“The Lord is truly amazing,” exclaimed Lassiter when recalling the trip. “I ran into a girl, Stephanie, who I had met years before at a Bible camp. We didn’t really

six or seven services a day throughout the combat area, so it was very scary moving around so much under such dangerous circumstances, but it was our job to be there for the troops. We had a lot of close calls.”

According to Navy Lt. Brian Shearer, 1/3 battalion chaplain and a native of Pittsburgh, part of a religious program specialist’s job is to provide security for the chaplain.

“A chaplain is a noncombatant, and doesn’t carry a weapon,” explained Shearer, a former Marine rifleman who served in the Corps from 1982 to 1986. “It’s one of the jobs of an RP to basically serve as a body guard for the chaplain.”

While in Fallujah, Lassiter found himself in firefights with the enemy on numerous occasions.

“The Marine Corps gave me an M-16 and trained me how to use it long before we deployed, just for those types of situations,” said Lassiter. “It was my duty to protect the chaplain, and also to aid the brave Marines in any way I could. I didn’t have any problem

know one another back then, but she had given me a school picture of herself. After all those years, I had still kept it. When we saw each other again, I knew right away she was the one.”

Soon after reuniting with Stephanie, Lassiter shipped off to basic training and then went straight to the Navy’s religious program specialist training.

After graduating, Lassiter received orders to Kaneohe Bay, but he continued to write letters and telephone Stephanie.

Then, not long after arriving in Hawaii, Lassiter received the orders that would have a deep impact on him. The battalion he was assigned to was shipping out to Iraq, and Lassiter was going with them.

“Fallujah was a different animal,” said Lassiter, describing the Iraqi city that has seen some of the fiercest fighting in the war. “I was with a chaplain who believed strongly in a ‘ministry of presence,’ which I believe is good. We would do

with it then, and I feel the same way about our upcoming deployment to Afghanistan. I will do my duty no matter what.”

For his service in Iraq, Lassiter was awarded the Combat Action Ribbon.

After 1/3 returned from Iraq, Lassiter spent some much-deserved leave back in Charlotte. Not one to waste any more time after having come so close to death in battle, Lassiter got down on one knee and proposed to Stephanie at the airport as soon as he got off the plane.

She said “Yes.”

“I am so proud of him and all the Marines and Sailors he is serving with in 1/3,” said Stephanie Lassiter, shortly after her husband returned recently with 1/3 to Kaneohe Bay, following a six-week pre-deployment training exercise in California. “The hardest part is that he is gone a lot, but he is serving his country and willing to serve on the front lines with the Marines who are protecting all of us back here, so it is worth the sacrifice. I believe God has him in His hands, so I don’t worry about him.”

According to Lance Cpl. Sean McDaniel, a 1/3 rifleman from Tucson, Ariz., having a religious program specialist like Lassiter deploy with the Marines “does a lot to help lift our spirits.”

“People get depressed or lonely on deployment, and sometimes they need someone to talk to other than just their buddies,” said McDaniel. “It’s a good feeling knowing that RP and Chaplain Shearer are right there with us. They aren’t worried about someone’s religious preference. They are worried about being there for the Marines.”

Lance Cpl. Joshua Jones, a 1/3 machinegunner from Decatur, Ill., said he couldn’t agree more.

“It’s scary what can happen in combat. Anybody who tells you different is either crazy or lying,” said Jones. “People need prayer. Even if a Marine isn’t religious, sometimes he needs someone to talk to, or to pray for family back home, should anything happen to him in battle. It’s good to have RP around.”

For his part, Lassiter, who most of the Marines, like McDaniel and Jones, refer to simply as “RP,” said that the “best part of being an RP is meeting Marines, and when a younger Marine comes to me and says, ‘Hey, RP, I have this problem, and I don’t know what to do.’ I don’t necessarily think he’s asking me to fix the problem, but he wants to know that I care enough to listen.”

See RP, A-6



Sgt. Andy J. Keeton, machinegunner, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marines, from Greensburg, Ind., rest while on patrol during Operation Pil, which was run in Jalalabad, Afghanistan, between Oct. 16 and 23. The operation included most of the battalion.

Sgt. Robert M. Storm
Combat Correspondent

JALABAD AIR FIELD, Afghanistan — Every unit has them, and 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, based out of Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, is no different. “Retreads,” Marines who decide not to reenlist and go back to civilian life — then after a period of time they realize that they miss the Corps or find that civilian life is not the way they remember it. Whatever the reason, they come back into the Marine Corps and pick up where they left off.

“My wife wanted me to try something different, deployments were tough on her. It’s harder on wives when we deploy, because at least we bring all of our friends with us,” said Sgt. Andy J. Keeton, machinegunner, from Greensburg, Ind. “I tried civilian life for about a year and wanted to come back, then 9/11 happened and that sealed it.”

Many spouses can’t take the constant stress that the Marine Corps puts on their

marriages and ultimately decide to divorce.

“My wife basically told me it was her or the Corps, when I told her I was going back. I remarried and now have a beautiful wife and a son named Braden,” said Keeton, laughing.

Some Marines return because of a sense of duty. The peacetime Marine Corps didn’t satisfy them, but now with almost everyone deploying to a combat zone, they want to come back and do their part.

“My first time in was boring — just a lot of training. I wanted a different routine, not just the same old thing. Then, after I left, the war happened, and I have a lot of friends who went to Iraq, and I felt like I should be with them. I knew one of the first sergeants who died over there; he was my old gunny when I was with recon. That had a big impact on me, because I felt like I should have been there,” said Cpl. Josh M. Basso, machinegunner, from Livermore, Calif.

Although many retreads are eager to resume their duties, sometimes there are issues for a returning Marine. The Marine

Corps policy used to state that after 180 days of inactive service, a Marine who returns to active duty loses one rank. Nowadays the rank you left with is the rank that you will return with — minus your date of rank.

Sometimes not just rank can be a problem. Since the Marine Corps is experiencing a high retention rate, the jobs that the Marines left with are not always available when they decide to return. With the high operational tempo, many Marines have to come back in as infantrymen and then do a lateral move to a desired military occupational specialty after three years.

According to Staff Sgt. Calvin J. Jackson, battalion personnel chief, from Clinton, Utah, as the operations clerk at the recruiting station he noticed that a lot of Marines would decide to get out of the Corps because they didn’t want to be a Marine anymore. After being out for a while, they would realize that they didn’t like civilian life and would want to come back into the Marine Corps, usually trying to get a more technical job in the process.

REC CENTER, From A-1

“Something we’re also planning on is a rather large industrial-size barbecue as well as a larger kitchen with brand new appliances,” said Black. “I believe the Marines will be very pleased.”

Camp Smith, though a relatively small base, still has its fair share of Marines who live in the barracks, approximately 118. Unlike most bases, Camp Smith has no chow hall; therefore, the Marines use commuted rations to buy groceries.

This can cause a problem, considering the Marines are limited to what they can cook inside their rooms, so they were provided with

a kitchen.

“I cooked in the Rec Center every once in a while, but it always seemed unsanitary, so it’s good to hear they’re going to fix it up,” said Cpl. Jonathan E. Knight an administrative clerk at Camp Smith.

Now with all the renovations, Marines can look forward to a kitchen even Martha Stewart would be proud of.

“That was one of the main items on the list, to provide a better equipped and more reliable kitchen for the Marines,” said Black.

With all the repairs and additions going into the center, Marines may have to wait a while for them all to be completed, but it may be sooner than they think.

“We are aiming at December, but I’m not sure how realistic that is,” said Black. “However, I know how important the place is to them, so I’m doing everything I can to get it done by then.”

Once opened, the Rec Center will not run on the same hours as before. It will be opened Mondays through Thursdays from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m., Fridays from 6 a.m. to 2 a.m., Saturdays from 8 a.m. to 2 a.m. and Sundays from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m.

“We are going to try these hours out to begin with, just to see how much the center is used. The more Marines use the center, the longer the hours will be,” said Black.

For any questions or concerns call Gabriella Black at 254-7593.



‘She’s a vegetarian’

Brig. Gen. Steven A. Hummer and his wife, Sheri A. Hummer, prepare to feed the traditional Chinese lion at the grand opening of the new McDonald’s aboard Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, Saturday. The lion is made of papier-mâché and is played by two people. The lion dance is choreographed and usually takes place in a story setting in which a hungry lion awakens and seeks out food, most commonly in the form of lucky green lettuce.

Sgt. Joseph A. Lee

Salutes

Corporals Course

Distinguished Graduates
Honor Graduate — Cpl. Thomas L. Rooney, 3/3
Second Place — Cpl. Aaron M. Ball, MCAF
Third Place — Cpl. Michael J. Kelly, HQBN

Gung Ho Award
Cpl. Paul S. Szoldra, 3/3

President Marine Corps University Honor Roll
Cpl. Thomas L. Rooney

Units wanting to submit information for “Salutes” should send an e-mail to editor@hawaiimarine.com or call 257-8836.

Postcards from the front

Compiled by Sgt. Robert Storm



Editor's note: Marines and Sailors of 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, are currently deployed to Afghanistan from their home base at Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay. Recently, Sgt. Robert Storm, a Marine Corps combat correspondent, gathered notes and took photographs of K-Bay Marines, which Hawaii Marine is proud to share.



Cpl. Patrick J. Covington, infantryman, from Fayetteville, N.C.

“Hello Mom, from Afghanistan.”



Cpl. Ahmed R. Moffet, chief cook, from Charlotte, N.C.

“To Shellie and Joey, I miss you.”

RP, From A-4

Lassiter, a Pentecostal Christian, said he likes meeting people from multi-cultural and religiously diverse backgrounds.

“I like people. I like helping people. If they want to talk, I like to have an ear open for them. It's not important to me if someone is Muslim, Mormon, Jewish, Catholic, Buddhist, or has no religious preference. What's important is that we are all God's children. Myself and the chaplain are here for everybody.”

According to Shearer, there are three main areas that RP Lassiter is exceptional in.

“Number one is his people skills,” remarked Shearer. “He has an ability to make people laugh and relax, regardless of their rank or religion. Number two is his combat skills, combat experience and overall battlefield awareness. Number three is his ability to take care of other people's religious rights. He goes out of his way to make sure people of different religious faith groups are provided for. He understands that freedom of religion

is one of the main reasons why we have such a great country.”

After his upcoming deployment to Afghanistan is complete, Lassiter said he is considering reenlisting for one more tour, and then he plans on returning to college, and eventually would like to earn a Ph.D. in psychology.

“I'd like to be a counselor, so I can continue to help people, and I definitely still want to be a minister,” commented Lassiter. “I've been so blessed in my life. God has been so very kind to my wife and myself, and I'm just thankful for His grace and mercy.”

Lassiter said he is also proud to be serving with the Marines of 1/3 on their upcoming deployment to Afghanistan.

“The Marines are the finest fighting men the world has ever seen,” said Lassiter. “I pray for them. I pray that God would build a hedge of protection around them. I pray that God would have angels surround them, and make them safe.”



Seaman Travis Lassiter, a religious program specialist, 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, from Charlotte, N.C., stands in front of the Chapel of the Desert, Camp Wilson, Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms, Calif., during 1/3's recent pre-deployment exercise in California. Lassiter, a combat veteran who previously served with 1/3 in Iraq, is slated to again deploy with 1/3 to a combat zone.

Lance Cpl. Stephen Kwietniak

Hawaii students visit MCAS Mirimar

Cpl. Skye Jones
Marine Corps Air Station Miramar

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION MIRAMAR, Calif. — The thrill in Randy Moss’ eyes grew as he picked up a fire hose and sprayed water onto the flight line.

Moss’ other classmates stood alongside the Aircraft Rescue and Firefighting vehicle, cheering and waiting for their turn to spray the “ultimate super soaker” during their visit to Marine Corps Air Station Miramar in October.

During the two-day tour, the juniors and seniors from James Campbell High School in Ewa Beach, Hawaii, explored the station’s facilities, studied different military occu-

pations and personally interacted with the station’s Marines.

In addition to their time spent at Miramar, the students attended recruit training, the emblem ceremony and graduation at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego during their weeklong trip.

“I feel more knowledgeable about what I might be getting into,” said Moss, an Ewa Beach, Hawaii, native. “This trip has given me a firsthand look about what the Marines do. I think joining will definitely benefit me in the future.”

Moss, along with many other students, enjoyed visiting several different work sections during their tour at Miramar.

On the first day, Moss dropped by

the graphics department where he shadowed Lance Cpl. Jeremy M. Giacomino, graphic illustrator, MCAS Miramar.

Giacomino taught Moss about preparing for a job in his field, going to boot camp and gave him other firsthand knowledge about the Marine Corps. Moss took plenty of notes during the three-hour visit and decided he wanted to sign up for the graphics field when he joined.

Moss quickly changed his mind the next day; however, when he talked to different Marines about the other opportunities available in the Corps.

“I thought I wanted to do graphics, but when I saw all of the different jobs, I discovered there are so many

options available,” he said. “Coming here has definitely helped me decide what I want to do with my life.”

Though not every student was as eager to join the Corps as Moss, students like Brittany Moncrease gained a better understanding of the military from the visit.

“I gained much more respect for Marines from this tour,” the high school senior said. “Everyone is so passionate about their jobs. When I visited the Marines in computer technology, I realized I have a lot to learn before I go to college. But if I ever did consider joining the military, I think I would become a Marine.”

According to Sara Ann Kimura, student activities coordinator, James

Campbell High School, in order to attend the tour, students go through a serious application process including an interview and a practice Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery test.

Kimura said the annual tour accommodates two types of students.

“We have those who are considering joining the military and then we have students who are in media, graphics or yearbook classes who come here to practice their photo-journalism skills,” she said. “Either way, it’s a wonderful experience for all of them, especially for those who never left the island.”

Additionally, each student must produce a scrapbook or write a story about the experience after the tour.

4TH FORCE, From A-1

various state and federal departments, the battalion was more than ready to accept its new role.

“The mission pulls very heavily from our civilian skills,” said Tomka. “We have law enforcement people and we also have Marines who work for state and federal corrections. This isn’t your normal Reserve unit — it’s a very experienced unit.”

For Cpl. Jose Orantes, 26, battalion supply chief, Headquarters Company, MP Battalion, 5/14, II MEF (FWD), their mission has been according to plan.

“We have been very effective,” said the Highland Park, Calif., native. “We’re an artillery unit turned MP battalion, and we’re doing great. We’re doing the things we need to do to make sure everything goes smooth. I’m up at all hours of the night making sure our guys have the gear they need to effectively carry out all missions.”

Although many units have come together to support 5th Battalion, 14th Marines, MP Battalion, the Marines have built strong relationships with each other.

“We’re doing everything we need to do to get the mission accomplished,” said Cpl. Lucio Bernabe, 26, the battalion Marine Corps Integrated Maintenance Management System specialist, Headquarters Company, MP Battalion, 5/14, II MEF (FWD). “The Marines are very supportive and close-knit. We are a very tight-knit family.”



RESCUE, From A-1

Although Drinkwater’s mother and sister were both stuck out in the water, he ended up saving Ami, Hyatt’s daughter.

“We didn’t go into the water because Staff Sergeant Hyatt and I had family members out there,” said Drinkwater. “It was just instinctive to help. You see someone in trouble, and you just kind of react and do the best you can to get them out of danger.”

Looking back on the event, the Marines agreed they only did what they thought anyone in their situation would have done.

“We are just glad that everyone ended up being okay,” said Kopacek, 20.

“The two lance corporals displayed extreme bravery without hesitation,” said Hyatt. “I don’t think it has sunk in yet, that without their quick thinking the girls might not have made it out of the water alive. It was a miracle they stayed above the water long enough for the Marines to get to them. We are all very thankful that we were there to help out and that everyone ended up being okay.”



Ami Hyatt (front left), 8, Theresa and daughter Julia Drinkwater, 7, pose in front of the Marines who rescued them: (from left) Staff Sgt. John T. Hyatt, Lance Cpl. Andrew G. Kopacek, and Lance Cpl. Mark R. Drinkwater II.

Cpl. Megan L. Stiner

Range Coach of the Week



Name: Private 1st Class Deidra Postemski

Age: 23

Hometown: Willington, Conn.

Unit: Combat Service Support Group 3

Stats for Oct. 24–28: 9 shooters total; no marksman, 3 sharpshooters, 6 experts

Stats for Oct. 17–21: 8 shooters total; 1 marksman, 2 sharpshooters, 5 experts

Postemski has been coaching since May, 2002.

Cpl. Michelle M. Dickson

MENTOR, From A-2

As such TECOM has designed a guidebook to assist leaders in the formal mentoring program.

From the very beginning, the guidebook spells out exactly what a mentor is and how important they can be to a junior Marine's life.

“I put a lot of faith into my uncle and mentor, First Sergeant. Kurt Day,” said Lance Cpl. Randi M.J. Foust, a combat videographer. “Since he knows me as a person, and actually cares for me, I know I can go to him with any questions or concerns that I may have.”

A mentor is defined as a “... wise adviser, teacher and guardian.” Every Marine from the private, who is graduating recruit training, to the commandant, needs a mentor to provide guidance and leadership, according to the mentor guidebook.

Along with the guidebooks, Marines will use their mentor logs as a syllabus to track their progress.

Mentor logs are documents that take the mentor through the process step by step, making sure to hit every key point, even so much as to tell them what tone of voice to use, when to respond and how to respond.

“All Marines must work to become good mentors. Being a good mentor is a fundamental part of good leadership,” according to Hagee. “Having and displaying genuine concern for your fellow Marine, all the time, and for every endeavor, is the key to success for Marine leaders.”

Commanders at all levels are responsible for ensuring that the mentor program is carried out in their units. Since the mentoring program is constantly changing and improving, any and all feedback is welcomed.

Information on the mentoring program is available at www.tecom.usmc.mil/mentoring.

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